United Nations A/S-30/PV.6

General Assembly

Official Records

Thirtieth special session

6th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Zinsou (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kamal Thapa, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): I thank the President for his leadership of the special session on the world drug problem.

Drug abuse has become a multidimensional problem across the globe, posing a great threat to our civilization. The use of various kinds of drugs is not only creating problems for young men and women, but also ruining them and their families. Therefore, we need to address this grave problem with collective political will at all levels. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports and support the operational recommendations made in the report on narcotic drugs. Nepal is fully committed to controlling the problem of drug use in the country and abroad.

Nepal is a party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and its Protocol, as well as the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Nepal enacted the Narcotics Control Act in 1976 and updated national legislation to address the issues of narcotics production, sales, imports and exports. We have a strong policy framework and robust institutional mechanisms to address this problem, including a national drug-control policy, narcotic drug-control strategy and guidelines for the operation of oral substitution therapy for drug users.

In addition to that, the Government has focused on the prevention side of the problem in a comprehensive manner with measures to reduce both supply and demand. The Ministry of Home Affairs has established a national coordination committee for drug abuse control chaired by the Minister for Home Affairs with separate district level committees in the country. Nepal is doing its level best to address the drug problems and looks forward to enhanced cooperation with the international community, including as envisioned in the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

In conclusion, our focus and priority must be the men, women and children affected by drug use and dependence, as well as the potential victims and all of the consequences for health and society that illicit drugs can have. I am confident that a coherent and concerted plan of action and the much-needed commitment to international cooperation emanating from this special session will go a long way towards ensuring an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alexander Khloponin, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-11224 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

Mr. Khloponin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to read out the address by His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, to this special session on the world drug problem

> "This special session of the General Assembly is a very important and necessary step to promote international counter-narcotics cooperation. It would be no exaggeration to say that the challenge of the illegal production and distribution of drugs has reached an unprecedented level. The drug business, which has become one of the most aggressive forms of transnational crime, poses a real threat to the State and society, claiming the lives and ruining the health of millions of people. Moreover, the proceeds of drug cartels serve as a source for financing terrorist and extremist groups. Clearly, it is only by consolidated and concerted efforts, fully exploiting the potential of the three United Nations drug control conventions, that this evil can be effectively resisted. It is encouraging that the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) of this session has summed up the constructive experience gained by different countries of the world.
>
> "We hope that the agreed diplomatic formulas will be followed by concrete steps towards their practical implementation at the national and intergovernmental levels. Russia, for its part, intends to further intensify its work on countering illicit traffic in narcotic substances in close cooperation with other members of the international community. I wish the Assembly every success and all the best."

This statement confirms the special attention paid by the Russian leadership to countering global drug challenges. The cross-border expansion of the drug trade has also affected Russia, posing a direct threat to our security. Obviously, we must take immediate, decisive and coordinated steps to deal with a problem of such scale. In 2010, Russia approved its national anti-drug policy strategy to 2020, which is a concrete plan to strengthen Russian society's fight against drugs.

Despite the measures taken by Russia, drugs continue to claim and blight the lives of thousands of its citizens, especially the younger ones. The community of nations has failed to effectively block drug transit routes from Afghanistan. We are taking energetic and targeted steps within the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other intergovernmental mechanisms. We hope that the outcome of this session will help to develop and strengthen international anti-drug cooperation. First and foremost, this refers to the Paris Pact initiative, which has established an effective mechanism for fighting trafficking in drugs of Afghan origin through the combined efforts of more than 50 countries and 20 organizations. We are committed to the Paris Pact and intend to improve it, based on broad intergovernmental cooperation.

At the same time, we expect all States to demonstrate enhanced solidarity and cooperation in their search for appropriate ways to respond to new mutating forms of the drug threat. First and foremost, we refer to new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet for drug smuggling. We believe that counter-narcotics efforts should not be affected in any way by double standards, political expediency or State selfishness.

The drug problem obviously cannot be tackled with interdictions and punitive measures alone. The outcome document is clear on that point. An effective system of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation is required, as is action to mobilize public opinion through mass media and youth and volunteer organizations. The social rehabilitation of drug addicts would allow them to reintegrate into society and is therefore of key significance. We need to extend a helping hand to those who are forced to sow their lands with drug crops because of poverty and destitution. Effective alternative development programmes are needed so that the poor can switch to legal sources of livelihood.

In today's world, the proceeds of drug trafficking fuel organized crime, terrorism and corruption. We align ourselves with the Security Council's qualification of illicit drug trafficking as a threat to international peace and stability. The United Nations must continue its uncompromising fight against drugs in order to enhance stability and diminish threats. In the run-up to the special session, there were some skeptics and pessimists who argued that the world community had lost the war against drugs. We cannot accept that. We have by no means lost the war, but if we are to win it, we must achieve a new level of solidarity and unity.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kristjan Thor Juliusson, Minister of Health of the Republic of Iceland.

Mr. Juliusson (Iceland): The discussions leading to this special session on the world drug problem underlined the importance and urgency of a shared global responsibility in addressing the complex drug-related issues. In light of this, I think it is crucial that we think of other ways forward and that we discuss openly and without prejudice how we can tackle the challenges posed to our society by drug use. I believe that the world drug problem is a health issue and will need to be solved as such.

I do not support legalizing drugs, but I am willing to participate in a balanced debate on the pros and cons of legalizing drugs that are now illegal. Indeed, I have gradually become convinced that the policy of criminalization that we have put in place does not deliver the desired outcome — the results we want. Therefore, given this great challenge, I ask: Are we going to stand by and watch this opportunity pass? Our answer should be "no". We should use this opportunity to the fullest. Indeed, it is our social responsibility to try to do better.

Our current policy of incarceration has many faults. We are locking young people into a vicious cycle for minor drug-related offences, and we are making it more difficult to reach addicts who need help and assistance. We need to examine alternatives to incarceration for minor drug-related offences. We need to understand better what contributes to recovery and what are the obstacles to full recovery from addiction. We need to refine drug policies and centre them on people, especially focusing on how to protect children and young people.

To achieve this aim, in 2014 I appointed a working group to address the effects of drug abuse, both for users and their families, in Iceland. The group consists of members from academia, non-governmental organizations, local government, civil society, police, hospitals and rehabilitation centres. The working group is to take stock of the current legal environment in Iceland and examine legislation and research on prevention and treatment from other countries that have turned the focus of drug abuse and addiction from criminalization to public health.

We look forward to a coherent strategy that emphasizes a humane approach — an approach that protects human rights and reduces the harmful effects of drug abuse while working towards regaining the trust of marginalized groups in society and the organizations providing them services and shelter. I look forward to the final product of the working group, which will be presented later this year.

We need to be able to prevent a problem before it happens. With stronger evidence-based drug prevention strategies, we are able to affect the factors that predict the problem. We need to be willing and ready to look at new ways to assist those in need and now is the time.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Htwe (Myanmar): First of all, Myanmar is in full alignment with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/S-30/PV.2) in this special session on the world drug problem.

All of us sitting in this Hall are equally concerned about the threat posed by the use, trafficking and production of illicit drugs. It greatly burdens our health, justice and law enforcement systems. And, more importantly, it is slowly breaking down the social fabric of our communities. Myanmar is fully and deeply committed to fight against the narcotic drug problem, in collaboration with all entities involved in the domain of preventing, containing and managing this problem. Each and every country needs to tackle this problem as its prime national duty; otherwise it could result in untoward implications that could have a disastrous and perhaps irreversible impact on their workforce.

The drug problem is also threatening the health and national security of the countries affected. We must therefore take a different perspective on this problem and view it in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The strategies currently being implemented must be critically reviewed and assessed from a realistic and unbiased point of view in terms of their effectiveness and efficiency, as well as in terms of their short- and long-term implications for the population. That should be done because the epidemiological situation at the time when strategies were formulated and interventions were identified may differ greatly from the current scenario. Context and environment are in a constant state of flux.

A coordinated and well-sychronized response to prevent and contain the use of narcotic drugs is needed, in particular among neighbouring countries. In that context, the real-time exchange of valid and reliable

information is crucial if we are to be successful in managing the narcotic drug problem. We need to view the narcotic drug problem as a public health issue. Therefore, the fight against the drug problem must be considered in line with the principles and approaches of public health. It would prove very beneficial to conduct research on the strategies being implemented. Relevant actions must also be carried out in a balanced manner as they are interrelated, intertwined, and mutually reinforcing and supportive. We also need to create a sense of ownership of programmes on the part of all those who are actually involved in the fight against the narcotic drug problem.

The successful adoption of resolution S-30/1 is really a milestone in our fight against the narcotic drug problem and on our path to achieving a drug-free society. The availability of precursor chemicals for producing psychotropic substances has posed a serious problem for many countries. We should earnestly look for the source of those precursor chemicals and take decisive action. Drug use, as alluded to earlier, is clearly a public health issue. Provisional, realistic and socially acceptable preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services for drug users and drug treatment and rehabilitation centres across the country must be given priority. Effective counselling and education should be provided to individuals admitted to such centres, based on the specific customs and culture of the country and on the findings of various qualitative research studies on attitudes towards drug use.

We also need to review and study the services being rendered in those centres in order to ensure that services are effective and efficient. Drug use surveys are one of the avenues by which effective and country-specific strategies and interventions can be formulated. We should also streamline, fine-tune and modify the services and strategies according to the changing epidemiological situation. A review of the existing drug-related legal framework and legislation may be conducted as appropriate and as per the changing international scenario. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the dire consequences of illicit drug use could be included in the life-skills curriculum in all schools in order to raise student awareness about the possibility of drug use, resulting in long-term dividends.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that a review of existing strategies and actions with a view to adapting them to suit the changing local epidemiological situation in the area of drug control is worth consideration. The ongoing review and monitoring of our work should be done in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and associated organizations and agencies, and with the full involvement of community-based entities.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia) (*spoke in Russian*): Today I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO): the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan.

The States members of the CSTO welcome the adoption of resolution S-30/1 at this special session on the world drug problem. We believe that its recommendations will enable the international community to more effectively achieve by 2019 the goals and tasks outlined in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. We are grateful to all the delegations that took part in the drafting and negotiations on the resolution.

We hope that the round tables being held alongside this meeting on specific aspects of the drug problem will enrich our discussion with interesting new ideas. The CSTO member States would like to once again stress their concern about the continuing problem of the large-scale illegal production and trafficking of drugs. It poses a serious threat to international peace and stability, an obstacle to States' sustainable economic and social development and a direct threat to people's health and lives, making it one of the major challenges to humankind in the twenty-first century. The illegal trade in drugs is also closely linked to such problems as the financing of terrorist and extremist activity, illegal arms trafficking and other types of transnational organized crime, corruption and money laundering.

The member States of the CSTO believe that one essential condition for effectively combating the world drug problem is working consistently to strengthen the central and coordinating role of the United Nations and the capacity of its specialized institutions and programmes. In that regard, they affirm their unwavering commitment to meeting their obligations in this area, starting with those undertaken under the three

foundational United Nations drug-control conventions and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, along with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the United Nations system's main policymaking body in the area.

We put particular emphasis on the importance of complying with the current international legal drug-control regime and the inadmissibility of legalizing some types of drugs. The CSTO's members are united in their opinion that the conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 provide us with sufficient instruments for effectively countering the spread of illegal narcotics, psychoactive substances and their precursors. It is vital that we significantly increase our efforts to eradicate the cultivation of opium poppies and coca plants for the illicit production of opiates, particularly heroin and cocaine. Expanded production of these extremely widespread and dangerous crops is destabilizing the situation in a number of regions and creating conditions conducive to rising crime, violence and corruption.

For a comprehensive, balanced approach to the world drug problem, the members of the CSTO believe that essential support to effective law-enforcement measures should be combined with programmes aimed at reducing demand for drugs and encouraging social and economic development.

Alternative development programmes are an effective way to counter the global spread of drugs. Our States are taking into account the General Assembly's guiding principles on alternative development, which could become an organic part of national and international long-term development efforts. We call on all States to take the necessary steps for preventing drug use and providing for the treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug addicts, based on the view that protecting people's life, health and well-being should be a fundamental principle of global drug-control policy.

Like the rest of the international community, the members of the CSTO are constantly encountering new drug challenges posed by transnational organized crime. In that connection, there is an acute need for operating systems capable of reacting to such threats and coming up with appropriate responses, particularly where new psychoactive substances and synthetic drugs are concerned. We believe it is especially important to draft timely and effective legislative, regulatory and administrative measures at the national level in order to respond to emerging new psychotropic substances.

Another important area where efforts should be coordinated is in combating the legalization of profits derived from illicit drug trafficking. Considering that as a rule, large-scale money-laundering operations and, for that matter, drug smuggling, are carried out by organized criminal groups, we call for strengthening cooperation among law enforcement agencies with a view to dismantling such groups.

The CSTO member States attach great importance to strengthening the mechanisms of bilateral, regional, inter-regional and international cooperation in combating drugs. In particular, our countries' close cooperation has enabled us to continue to increase the effectiveness of our joint law-enforcement activities in the fight against illicit drug trafficking. For example, in May 2015 Operation Canal–Patrol seized 15 tons of illicitly trafficked drugs and more than 22.5 tons of precursors, while in September of the same year the Operation Canal–Synthetic-Post seized 20 tons of drugs. We call on all interested States and international organizations to step up their cooperation with the CSTO in combating drugs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the Delegation of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Alsuwaidi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): We do not have a great deal of time between now and 2019 to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. We have seen the problem and its damaging effects on people's health and well-being continue to spread, which has led us to convene this special session in order to review our strategy, improve on the successes we have achieved and fix the things that are not working. We are meeting in this Hall to sign off on a final document (resolution S-30/1, annex) that represents our shared commitment to confronting the world drug problem.

The United Arab Emirates has undertaken several national programmes aimed at dealing with the drug problem. We have seen a 7 per cent drop in the number of addicts in 2014 and 10 per cent in 2015. We have redoubled our operational preventive efforts and have seen the total amounts seized increase by 9 per cent in 2014 and 15 per cent in 2015. With regard to cooperation

in the fight against drugs, we have contributed to 240 international seizures of 25 tons of drugs and received the award for the best operational cooperation in 2015.

In the area of the human rights of women and children, in 2015 we were chosen by consensus to preside over the Virtual Global Taskforce, an international alliance designed to protect children from the dangers of the Internet, in recognition of the ability and effectiveness of the United Arab Emirates police. In its most recent ministerial shuffle the Government appointed a 23-year-old woman as Minister of Youth Affairs, the youngest in the region and indeed in the world, as part of its efforts to encourage young people to participate in decision-making. We have also established a ministry of happiness and well-being in accordance with our other policies and the principles of human rights.

Beyond the principle of the sovereignty of States, and leaving aside the three conventions that are the pillars of the international fight against drugs, we should recall the terrorist aggression in Afghanistan, the dead and wounded, innocent civilians, women and children robbed of their lives by terrorists. And yet a few years ago, some of those here demanded that such criminals be granted the right to live. The United Arab Emirates Ministry of Tolerance ensures respect for others and for their beliefs, faiths, cultures and religions. We hold dialogues with them and listen to them. Whether capital punishment should be abolished or not, we ask others to show us mutual respect for our religion, faith, ideas and ideology.

In conclusion, I hope that all States, whatever their individual policies regarding the fight against drugs, will work to achieve success in combating that scourge.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Dato Hamdan Abu Bakar, Deputy Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister of Brunei Darussalam.

Mr. Abu Bakar (Brunei Darussalam): This special session provides an important opportunity for us to review the progress made and challenges that remain in implementing the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. We must take full advantage of our important forum and work together to tackle the drug problem, making use of our resources to come up with new policies and approaches. In doing so, we must also allow each country to address its own drug problem in a way that fits with its own context and norms and fully respects the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

It is vital that we act to address the new challenges and tackle every related issue, especially reducing supply and demand and ensuring effective law enforcement. That requires an intensive effort at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, with the ultimate goal being to promote the health, security and well-being of our peoples, their families and society as a whole, and to safeguard society's right to be free of drug abuse.

Brunei Darussalam is fully aware that the transnational nature of the drug problem means that no country can avoid it altogether, and Brunei Darussalam is no exception. In tackling the problem, we have to work closely with other countries, since it demands common and shared responsibility at all levels. We are fully committed to countering the world drug problem and to implementing the three international drug-control conventions. We have adopted a comprehensive approach that is balanced between strategies for reducing both supply and demand. To do that, Brunei Darussalam has put in place a robust and comprehensive legal, policy and administrative framework.

In deciding the best approach to addressing the drug problem in each country, we must take into account each State's sovereign right, its diverse political, economic, social and cultural contexts and its social norms. Brunei Darussalam is relatively drug-free. Only approximately 0.1 per cent of the population is involved with illicit drugs each year. That has been possible because we have taken a tough stance on illicit drugs. Our zero-tolerance approach to achieving a drug-free country has worked for us, and we will continue to strive to keep our country safe from the dangers of illicit drugs and ensure that they do not reach the public, especially women and children. We have focused on building a safe and secure Brunei Darussalam for our people.

We would like to reiterate that we stand with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in embracing a zero-tolerance approach to illicit drugs. We affirm our belief that the three international drug conventions should continue to serve as the basis for global drug policy, and we respect the sovereignty of each Member State in deciding on and implementing policies that best cater to its individual needs, based on

the unique circumstances and norms of its society. We want to be part of a drug-free ASEAN.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our full support for the Commission on Narcotics Drugs as the main body and principal policymaking entity of the United Nations for all drug-related policies and issues, and we welcome the resolution that we have agreed on and adopted, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Romania.

Mr. Jinga (Romania): It is a privilege to be here today to discuss such a crucial turning point for international drug policy. I would like to congratulate the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for its preparations for this special session of the General Assembly. We welcome the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which gives momentum to a renewed approach to our action in this field. It is our hope that we will continue to discuss key aspects that can ensure that we develop our drug policies further.

Romania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/S-30/PV.1). I would now like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that requires effective and increased international cooperation. It calls for an integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach to supply- and demand-reduction policies. As the Deputy Secretary-General rightly remarked two days ago (see A/S-30/PV.1), it is important that we listen to one another and learn from one another's experiences, not least about how the issue affects our peoples' well-being. Despite increasing efforts on the part of States, international organizations, the scientific community and civil society, the problem continues to pose a serious threat to public health and safety, and particularly to children, young people and their families. Human beings must be at the centre of drug policies. Given the adverse consequences of drug abuse, it is imperative that we strengthen measures to reduce the demand for drugs, especially those that target the younger generation, by developing comprehensive drug-abuse prevention programmes. At the same time, treatment and care, harm-reduction measures and social reintegration must be at the core of all our strategies.

Romania's national anti-drug strategy is in full compliance with the international drug-control conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law. The current international drug-control framework provides Member States with the legal instruments and the flexibility that they need in order to react to current challenges in the area at the national, regional and international levels.

People who use drugs should be entitled to the same rights as non-users. We believe that the death penalty is not the way to limit drug trafficking, and that we should persist in our efforts to implement better alternatives to incarceration for drug users and allocate more resources to measures such as therapeutic justice. The risks that new psychoactive substances pose to human health demand that we come up with an effective response. We must be more flexible in formulating and implementing evidence-based drug policies built on respect for human rights. If we are to have more impact on that issue, we must strengthen our presence around it and raise awareness at every level of society and in the media.

Countering all the various aspects of the world drug problem requires a firm political commitment to reducing supply, as the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem states. We are now facing a new trend in the form of the illicit sale and purchase of new psychoactive substances via the Internet, which has led to new challenges and risks to human health and safety. At the same time, we are witnessing the rapid evolution of a new market — the so-called Darknet — a virtual place for selling and brokering transactions involving illicit drugs, new psychoactive substances and other illicit goods. On top of that, we are still dealing with the traditional threat posed by heroin and cocaine trafficking, which continues to require strong countervailing action on the part of all the relevant stakeholders. To combat those problems, therefore, we must combine our law-enforcement efforts and take advantage of the latest technologies and instruments.

No country can succeed in this struggle on its own. National law-enforcement agencies and international bodies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the

World Health Organization and other United Nations and regional entities must strengthen their cooperation in order to respond properly to the growing trends in the illicit sale and purchase of controlled substances. It is crucial that we improve our mechanisms for sharing information and data relating to the activities of organized criminal groups, because sharing information continuously and rapidly is key to effective drug law enforcement.

Romania is fully committed to combating this global challenge by working closely with partners all over the world. We strongly believe that international cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders is now more essential than ever.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Delcy Rodríguez Gómez, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Ms. Rodríguez Gómez (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our subject today is unquestionably relevant to every society in the world. When we consider the history behind the convening of this special session, beginning with the establishment, in 1946, of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, barely a year after the creation and founding of our important Organization, the United Nations, and look at the conventions that have been adopted on drugs in 1961, 1972 and 1988, we see a topic that gives us grounds for reflection and for concern. We know that the development of a security policy to address the drug issue, with increasing militarization, has led to a regrettable failure in combating a scourge that assails entire societies.

Only considering that drugs pose a threat to the security of both individual countries and the world as a whole has led us to ignore a public health problem. That mistaken approach — and this must be condemned from here at the General Assembly — has led to foreign intervention and the undermining the rule of law and national sovereignty in the name of prosecuting the so-called war against drugs. In recent years, under the Bolivarian revolution, we have been able to say that Venezuela is unquestionably not a producing country, and we do not have a trafficking problem. We are also not a consumer country. We are not a country where people launder the financial profits of drug-trafficking, nor does our financial system profit from such activities. The United Nations itself declared Venezuela to be a country free of illicit drug crops. We have in place a national plan to counter drugs that puts the human person first, stressing democracy and human rights. That approach helps us to ensure the protection of essential human rights and to deal with the public-health harm caused by the scourge of drugs.

When we look at the failed war-like approach, we see an attempts to militarize the problem in certain countries and to invade and occupy those countries. One need only look at the case of Afghanistan. Afghanistan was invaded, and yet since that time opium cultivation has increased eightfold. That is really food for thought. We have to rethink the entire model, our entire approach. Drugs have to be regarded as a public-health problem. In the Union of South American Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States we have adopted a vision based on full respect for democracy and human rights, We must see drugs as a human and public-health problem.

Venezuela would like to take this opportunity to reject the politicization of the sensitive issue of drugs. We have to transcend the failure that the warlike policy of the war on drugs has led to. We have to reject the double standards that are applied by imperialist countries in this area when they claim to be fighting drugs by invading countries. They thereby undermine the rule of law and violate the legitimate authority of countries. The imperialist countries apply double standards, and money from drug trafficking is being laundered in those countries. We have to focus on respect for the individual and human rights. One cannot, under the pretext of promoting development, undermine the justice system and the rule of law. We have to move away from the 51-year-old policy of the war on drugs. It has failed. We must abandon the warlike policy of the war on drugs and adopt a truly democratic policy based on strict respect for human rights, so that we can actually move ahead and take care of this public-health problem.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Honduras.

Mr. Mejía (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Honduras endorses the statement made by the representative of the delegation of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/S-30/PV.1).

We appreciate the holding of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem with a view to combining efforts and tackling energetically,

and also in solidarity, the dreadful scourge of drugs with consequences of incalculable magnitude for all humankind.

It is incontestable that the drug phenomenon has a global component. However, each country has its own historic, geographic, social and political reality that shapes its individual approach. Honduras, a mountainous country of impenetrable forests and unpredictable floods, is one of the countries most affected by the illicit drug trafficking in the Western hemisphere, and its rugged terrain lends itself to serving as a strategic staging ground for criminal enterprise.

This important event provides us with an opportunity to present the reality of our country to those present here, given its complex nature. It urges us to reflect and to continue to strengthen our institutions.

The firm resolve of Honduras is in keeping with the appeal of the leaders of the region to carry out a process of change in our strategies concerning the illicit trafficking in and consumption of harmful substances in order to enhance and intensify joint efforts at the national, regional and international levels, based on the principle of a common but differentiated responsibility.

The State of Honduras seeks to continue to develop and strengthen its comprehensive public-health programmes, taking into account the gender perspective and the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the framework of ensuring full respect for human rights. On that count, our country is committed to putting the protection of the right to life and the integrity of the human being as its principal objectives of its drug policy.

We therefore need to be aware that this problem represents a huge cost for countries that serve as transit points for the traffic in illicit drugs between drug-producing and drug-consuming countries. That translates into a considerable number of violent deaths generated by the ongoing conflicts between organized criminal groups, coupled with the high cost of the resources required to combat those groups.

We must remember that Honduras is a signatory to the United Nations conventions on transnational crime and on drugs —in this particular case, drug trafficking. In that regard, civil society plays a significant role in shaping the international drug policy and the decision-making processes. Our emphasis in the fight against drugs therefore has two components:, namely, targeting domestic criminal structures and focusing on the fight against corruption, which is rooted in the same phenomenon.

In that regard, over the past two years we have extradited ringleaders and dismantled criminal structures; reduced the levels of violence and insecurity through the creation and strengthening of Government institutions mandated to combat drug trafficking; approved legal norms; decreased illicit drug trafficking by establishing land, air and sea shields; and identified and destroyed clandestine air strips and dismantled laboratories.

In the educational field, we have trained thousands of children, teachers and parents in the prevention of the presence of licit and illicit drugs in schools. We have established treatment and rehabilitation centres for the comprehensive care of addicts, including also a detoxification unit, among other actions. However, we recognize that much more needs to be done.

With regard to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted in 2009, difficulties have arisen in its implementation. We are confident, however, that this special session of the General Assembly will produce innovative proposals and ideas with regard to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We believe that the monitoring and constant evaluation of the functioning of national organizations related to the drug problem should be accompanied by transparency in the use of international cooperation funds, which form a permanent component in efforts to strengthen the 2009 Action Plan and serve as the cornerstone in the development of a comprehensive and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem.

With regard to the fight against money-laundering and the promotion of judicial cooperation, it is imperative for the State of Honduras to constantly update its jurisprudence in that area and train personnel for the analysis and repression of that crime. That includes greater international cooperation in tax matters and a coordinated fight against illicit financial flows.

In conclusion, allow me to recall, as stated last year in the General Assembly by the President of the Republic, Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado,

> "Honduras produces and consumes practically no drugs. We are a transit country. Unfortunately,

we provide only the battlefield and the dead." (*A/69/PV.7, p.20*)

I have briefly highlighted some earlier approaches in what is a common problem for all States meeting here in order to find the best possible solutions for the benefit of humankind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the State of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this special session on the world drug problem. The drug problem is among the most important challenges facing the world, and the international community has made strenuous efforts to address it. The strategies undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have achieved considerable and commendable results. Drug abuse and the illicit trade in drugs has had catastrophic results on social and economic stability, sustainable development, the security of States and the rule of law. They also represent a real threat to public health, particularly the health of children and youth, and it behoves us to make extra efforts and promote international cooperation and coordination to address this scourge.

Drug-related activities and the impunity of offenders are reasons for serious concern. They undermine the rule of law and threaten the stability of societies. We find it disconcerting that money is being extracted from illegitimate activities relating to drugs and that wealth from those sources has been used to support terrorism and promote illicit trafficking in persons, as well as arms smuggling. We must take the necessary measures on the bilateral and national levels to address that problem. Such efforts should be accompanied by economic and social policies that concentrate on the welfare of the citizen, providing health care and on raising awareness, developing international and regional cooperation, sharing responsibilities and promoting efforts with international organizations and civil-society organizations, in accordance and in fulfilment of the letter and spirit of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

The State of Qatar continues to expend efforts at the regional and transnational levels to address this problem, including through the exchange of information and by building capacities, providing legal assistance and undertaking joint investigative efforts to address the problem. Qatar provides security and stability to its society and works to protect it from the risks of drugs through preventive programmes, particularly among youth, and through education and awareness-raising programmes aimed at countering a scourge that threatens to undermine the country's public health system.

The Doha Declaration, adopted by the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, hosted by Qatar in 2015, is a step forward towards the realization of criminal justice and the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels.

In conclusion, we would like to renew our commitment to what we have already agreed on, namely, ongoing cooperation aimed at achieving practical results in combating the drug problem. We would like to continue our efforts at the bilateral and international levels and through our membership in UNODC. We would be remiss if we failed to express our gratitude to UNODC and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the main bodies in the United Nations entrusted with combating drugs. We call for the promotion of the role of those two bodies and for strengthening their capacity so that they can provide technical assistance to Member States.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Namibia.

Mr. Maruta (Namibia): At the outset, I would like to thank the board tasked by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to engage in a process aimed at reaching consensus so as to finalize the outcome document of the special session, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex). The high attendance at this special session and the large number of States gathered here are testimony to the fact that the drug problem is a global one and must be addressed in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

This meeting is significant to all of us here and to the international community at large, as it presents a collective opportunity for Member States to assess the progress made in implementing the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, as endorsed by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session in 2009.

During the fifty-ninth session many Member States highlighted the issue of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, equality, the right to health and a people-centred approach to addressing the world drug problem. Namibia takes note of the fact that the outcome document that was adopted here at the beginning of this special session on the world drug problem does not reflect the issue of human rights as it relates to the death penalty. Namibia calls upon Member States to abolish the use of the death penalty for drug-related offences, if it is provided for in their national penal codes. It urges Member States that still have the death penalty in their statutes to consider abolishing it, or to put it under moratorium.

Namibia further reiterates its support for resolution 70/181, which, inter alia, requests the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to produce a short, substantive, concise and action-oriented document comprising a set of operational recommendations, based upon a review of the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, including an assessment of achievements, as well as of ways to address long-standing and emerging challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of the three international drug-control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments.

Namibia is fully aware that the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that should be addressed in a multilateral setting through effective and increased international cooperation. It demands an integrated, multidisciplinary, mutually reinforcing, balanced and comprehensive approach to supply- and demand-reduction strategies. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to ensuring that all aspects of demand reduction, supply reduction and international cooperation are addressed in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international conventions and protocols and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The illegal trade in drugs such as cannabis, cocaine and synthetic stimulants is a threat to Namibian society. The rapid globalization of the drug trade over the past decade has shown that no country is immune to the scourge of drugs. However, Namibia has put in place strategies to deal with the phenomenon. No illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances takes place in Namibia. However, the use of illicit drugs, with cannabis being the most commonly used drug, has increased in recent years. Namibia has now changed from being a transit route for drug smugglers to a consumer country, where an increasing number of people are being arrested for trafficking of various types of drugs, such as dagga, cocaine, crack cocaine and heroin, for domestic use.

Namibia reiterates its commitment to ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking, and emphasizes that one of the main aspects of efforts to improve availability is to ensure their affordability. Furthermore, Namibia notes with concern the simultaneous unaffordability of pain-relief drugs, in developing countries in particular, owing to the high prices set by the pharmaceutical companies.

In collaboration with international and regional organizations, such as INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Southern African Development Community and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization, the Namibian police conduct joint operations specifically designed to combat all forms of cross-border drug-related crime. Those interventions are important in our efforts to deal with the issue of demand and supply reduction and to ensure that the population is safe and protected from illicit drugs, which, in most cases, contribute to crime, especially gender-based violence.

In conclusion, we appeal to UNODC, within the framework of its global mandate, for the necessary support for capacity-building and technical assistance to Member States, at their request.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alpha Barry, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and of the Burkinabé Abroad of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Barry (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso, I would like take the opportunity afforded to me by this forum to offer my warmest congratulations to Mr. Lykketoft on his election to preside over the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, on the world drug problem. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I assure them of the full support of my delegation in the conduct of our work.

My delegation endorses the statements delivered by the representatives of the Sudan and of Morocco, respectively, on behalf of the Group of African States

and of the International Organization of la Francophonie (see A/S-30/PV.2). We also take note of the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its preparatory work for this session (see A/S-30/4).

Burkina Faso welcomes the adoption, on 25 September 2015, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), especially Goal 3, target 5, which reads "strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol", in which drug abuse was made a world priority. This special session on the world drug problem remains an important framework for examining the progress achieved by all parties involved in the fight against drugs. In that regard, I note the relevance of resolutions 69/200 and 69/201, whereby the Assembly mandated that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should lead the process of preparations for this special session.

Because the fight against illicit drug trafficking raises the need for the common and shared responsibility of all States, it requires a global, coordinated and integrated response, supported by greater international and regional cooperation. Within the context of the effective implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, Burkina Faso has initiated and executed the following steps.

On the legislative level, we have strengthened legislation towards the adoption of a law on a customs code. That law uncompromisingly prohibits trafficking in narcotics. At the institutional level, Burkina Faso has created, at the service level within the police, the gendarmerie and customs, specialized units that have already carried out operations involving major drug seizures. In the same vein, we have strengthened the capacity of our judicial entities to reinforce the fight against illicit drug trafficking, which cannot be effective without the organization of a reliable and trustworthy judiciary.

The revenue generated by that trafficking constitutes a financial windfall for other trafficking arrangements used in other criminal activities. That has been the case with regard to terrorism in the Sahel and Saharan region, where my country is located. Drugs fuel terrorism. In plain language, that scourge fuels the other scourge. The fight against drug trafficking in the region is also a fight against terrorism and violent extremism. That is our belief, and it is the conviction of the Group of Five of the Sahel region, which group includes Mauritania, Mali, the Niger, Chad and, of course, my country, Burkina Faso.

The 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action strongly recommends that States promote international judicial cooperation. In order to strengthen such cooperation, Burkina Faso and the countries in our subregion and, indeed, throughout the world, must pool their efforts and work together in synergy. We believe that greater international cooperation will enable us to better confront the obstacles that remain in the fight against drugs. Burkina Faso is involved in various initiatives under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the results obtained have been very encouraging.

Allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate that my country stands ready to work in synergy with other States to build a world of peace, security and justice, free from the scourge of drugs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Ecuador.

Mr. Morejón Pazmiño (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to take this unique opportunity to express to all Member States the deep gratitude of the Government and the people of my country for the solidarity that they have shown in connection with the tragedy that we have recently experienced as a result of a powerful earthquake that has taken human lives and caused widespread destruction. I wish to publicly thank the United Nations system and the representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, especially Ms. Jessica Faieta and Mr. Stephen O'Brien, the principal representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, who immediately deployed an assistance mechanism for my country, which won our hearts and gratitude.

While that phenomenon, which caused deaths and tragedies, was an act of nature, today, at this special session, we are discussing another cause of death, but one that we can prevent — the phenomenon of drugs. In that regard, Latin America is certainly the region in the world that has most felt the impact of criminal drug trafficking. The widespread violence in many cities and towns in our region is the result of the illegal competition among criminal organizations to control the drug market. We also suffer the environmental

degradation caused by programmes for the eradication of illicit drug crops.

The traditional international drug-response strategy has not delivered the expected results, As such, at this point we need to rethink that approach. It is undeniable that no matter how strong our commitment to reduce supply, no matter how many illicit-drug-crop eradication programmes are carried out, wherever there is demand for drugs, there will be someone willing to satisfy that demand.

Furthermore, as long as no reference is made to the control of money-laundering in developed countries — where there is the most demand for illicit substances — the nations of the South will continue to bear the brunt of the prohibitionist policy of the so-called war on drugs. In that context, there is a hidden intent to impose the hegemony that has transformed the countries of the North into the arbiters of democracy and transparency, and which has led the countries of the South to be listed as so-called money-launderers, although we know that 90 per cent of the dirty money is laundered in the banks of the North. That is why Ecuador considers it vital that the international community make an effort to explore new approaches and alternatives to the prohibitionist and punitive model developed in the last century. The largest consumer countries should strengthen their efforts and fully assume their responsibility for the perpetuation of the problem.

We reiterate what we have expressed at various international events and forums: the drug policy established by the United Nations is in need of profound change, given the results obtained in the framework of the international conventions in force. We believe that by letting ourselves be guided by scientific evidence, pragmatism and full respect for the national sovereignty of States, together we can build new and better drug policies that focus on health and the prevention of consumption, policies that place the individual — rather than the substances — at the centre of the formulation and implementation of policies. In that regard, we also recognize the importance of harm-reduction policies as effective measures to reduce the health and social risks associated with drug use.

Ecuador, aware of our international commitments, will continue to develop a policy based on unrestricted respect for human rights and with a cross-cutting, balanced and gender-based approach. We categorically reaffirm our stance in favour of the abolition of the death penalty, including for drug-related offences.

We believe that comprehensive prevention and rehabilitation, without neglecting the regulation and control of activities linked to controlled substances, should be the main areas of focus of a new regulatory body. In the same way, we continue to promote sustained and sustainable economic development for populations at risk of being co-opted by drug trafficking through our national preventive alternative-development policy.

As part of the social transformation currently under way in Latin America, we are maintaining our serious and determined commitment to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and build more equitable societies — where debate and the reformulation of drug policy cannot be absent. That entails recognition of the reality of the structural conditions of violence, poverty and destitution as the theatre within which the illicit trafficking problem thrives, leaving little chance for the most vulnerable populations and the State to guarantee the peace and good living of its habitants. As a result of that process, the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador has decriminalized the use and consumption of drugs, as we view them as a matter of public health.

In conclusion, my country is convinced of the urgent need for a radical change in the approach to the social phenomenon of drugs. When implementing such policies, priority should be given to human rights, which is unavoidable at this point. That will be possible when, beyond the question of will, we begin with a genuine solution based on drug-policy reform and the end of the persecution of the nations of the South. As I said, the recent earthquake was a natural cause of death. In terms of the drug problem, the prevention of major disasters in our countries rests in our hands.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Arab Republic Egypt.

Mr. El Ghoul (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is a great pleasure to be here today in order to address the activities of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. We have been able to highlight international cooperation based on the principle of shared responsibility.

The drug problem affects our efforts to achieve socioeconomic development and destroys the social fabric of States. I would like to extend my special thanks to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and

its technical secretariat for all their efforts in the successful preparation for this session. That includes the adoption of the final document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", during the fifty-ninth session of the Commission held in Vienna this past March and now embodied in resolution S-30/1.

There is no doubt that the implementation of the operational recommendations in resolution S-30/1 will be an important step in helping Member States to achieve their objectives, in accordance with the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. That is why we have been complying with the three international drug conventions, which represent the cornerstone for the international system to combat the drug problem, while maintaining respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular national sovereignty, the territorial integrity of States and non-intervention in the internal affairs of countries. In that respect, my country would like to say that those important documents would suffice, if we can fully implement them in good faith and without selectivity, to achieve a world free of drugs and societies free of drug abuse.

In the same way, we must not miss this opportunity to confirm the pivotal role played by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, especially during the past year. It is the body responsible for ensuring that Member States implement United Nations drug policies, the recommendations concerning our joint commitment to effectively address and counter the world drug problem, as well as the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action. We think the Commission plays an important role in the implementation of the recommendations in that document. We are therefore confident that the Commission will be able to achieve its task successfully with the help of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which has the leadership role in terms of addressing the world drug problem.

Egypt was among the first countries to understand the danger of the drug problem. It issued the first legislation criminalizing the planting of opium in 1800. It also established a special system to combat drugs in 1929. We participated in the initial establishment of a system of control by the international Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Opium and other Dangerous Drugs in the 1930s. Egypt has acceded to all the relevant international conventions, beginning with The Hague International Opium Convention in 1912, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the 1994 Arab Convention against Illicit Use of and Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

The changes and developments at the international level in the fight against drugs have led to increased concerns on the part of the international community in addressing the problem, indicating that there need to be specific changes with regard to strategy in dealing with the supply and demand of drugs. At the same time, my country has felt the danger of the problem at the international and regional levels and its negative effects on society in different areas. Egypt has adopted a comprehensive strategy to combat drugs, aimed at combating illicit drug trafficking, combating the importation of drugs and eliminating the centres of criminal activity, including that involving precursors — especially Tramadol — as well as increasing international cooperation by participating in all regional and international conferences and by entering into various treaty arrangements with Member States. Within the framework of that strategy, we have paid particularly balanced attention to reducing supply and demand by establishing a national council to combat addiction in 1986, implementing general policies and finding ways to treat and prevent addiction. We have also established a special system for raising awareness that works with governmental and non-governmental entities in order to reduce demand.

Because we believe that the drug problem is international in nature and has dangerous effects on societies and friends and that international cooperation is important, given that no country can face the drug problem alone, Egypt's machinery to combat drugs has cooperated with numerous countries from 2014 to 2015.

The agenda of this special session includes discussing the important issue of combating drugs, indicating the desire of the international community to confront this international problem and find effective mechanisms and new ways tor ensure cooperation among States throughout the world. Our hope is for a world free of drugs. That cannot be achieved through individual States' efforts, but through a collective and sincere effort on the part of States through mechanisms provided by the existing conventions. We are confident that the special session will strengthen our common

efforts to achieve a better future for our people by effectively combating the world drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the Permanent Representative of Benin.

The President of the Republic of Benin, His Excellency Mr. Patrice Talon, invited to take part in the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, has asked me to represent him. He sends his fraternal and amicable greetings to his peers and the various senior figures who have convened in New York on this occasion.

In carrying out the task that he has entrusted to me, I would first like to express my warm congratulations to the President of the General Assembly and the competent bodies of the United Nations for having so well organized this special session, which represents a turning point in international efforts to combat the scourge of drugs. This special session of the General Assembly offers us a unique opportunity to review the progress made in implementing the 2009 Political Declaration and the Plan of Action with regard to international cooperation aimed at developing an integrated and balanced strategy encompassing research and appropriate solutions to the challenges posed by the world drug problem.

In 2015, the international community adopted a new framework for sustainable development focused on human beings, which aims to eradicate poverty on Earth within 15 years, while leaving no one behind. Through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to

"a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination" (*resolution 70/1, para. 8*).

In the light of those principles, we must now evaluate our actions and the measures taken, so that we can assess the world drug problem to date and recalibrate our strategies and policies at all levels to confront the problem, while developing a comprehensive approach on the way forward and the measures that need to be implemented in order to meet the challenges that we have identified. Like those who preceded us, we note with concern that, seven years after the commitments made in Vienna to combat illicit drugs and despite the efforts and progress made by numerous States, international organizations and civil society, the drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the rule of law and the health, security and the well-being of humankind, in particular the well-being of young people.

According to data provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for 2013, measurable progress has indeed been made in controlling the use of illicit drugs, in comparison with the statistics of the previous year. However, when we take a more comprehensive view in analysing the data, including in particular the impact of drugs on security and sustainable development, we get a more varied picture, with mixed results for the efforts that have been carried out. African countries in general, and those of West Africa in particular, have acute vulnerabilities relating to the drug problem that have socioeconomic, health and security impacts and, more important, threaten the very existence of certain States of the region. Those countries are characterized by high demographic growth rates, and their populations, which are mainly made up of young people, are faced with a lack of professional qualifications, unemployment and uncertain prospects for the future. Drugs, transnational organized crime associated with radical ideologies, violent extremism and terrorism find fertile ground in those areas.

UNODC has on repeated occasions sounded the alarm in its recent reports so as to alert the international community with regard to the increasing pressure affecting West Africa. These phenomena have increased to such a degree that they are a major obstacle to governance and the stability of States.

The trafficking of illegal drugs threatens national cohesion and sustains violence and the underground and mafia economy. The connections established by the major international crime, arms trafficking and terrorism networks, as well as money-laundering, are genuine challenges to be met by our country.

In an attempt to respond to these threats, since the 1980s my country, Benin, has taken concrete measures by establishing a legal and institutional framework to ensure control of illicit drugs. Several laws and regulations have been drawn up and administrative structures and interministerial committees have been established, including the Interministerial Committee to Combat the Abuse of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. In July 2000, an anti-drug policy was drawn up, based on a national master plan

and a national action plan for the implementation of strategies under the national policies.

In this context, Benin has ratified the three United Nations conventions — the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It has also ratified the Convention against Corruption, the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Benin has also signed the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, of 2009.

Nonetheless, Benin is aware that it cannot succeed in this struggle by itself. That is why my country is fully committed, together with its neighbours, to all subregional and regional efforts aimed at providing our group of countries with integrated strategies. Benin participated in drawing up and adopting the Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa, as promoted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and adhered to the regional action plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug addiction in West Africa.

In that regard, my country is grateful for the support UNODC has provided to the region in the implementation of the regional action plan through technical assistance for the West Africa Coast Initiative, jointly with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, INTERPOL and the United Nations Office for West Africa. Thanks to the implementation of that project, regional cooperation among the detection and repression services has been strengthened and the units fighting transnational crime are operational in many countries. The support of UNODC in the creation of the network of central authorities and prosecutors in West Africa is a crucial aspect of cooperation and mutual legal assistance.

Benin calls on the United Nations, through UNODC, to continue to support the implementation of the ECOWAS regional action plan by helping to mobilize appropriate and predictable resources to support the efforts undertaken. We must welcome the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which is of great importance given the dynamics developing in the area owing to the combination of transnational crime and violent religious extremist movements.

Critical evaluation of the management of the drug problem in my country has exposed shortcomings that call for improving the strategy to fight this scourge. Benin is working to design a new integrated national policy document to fight illicit drugs, which should help to establish a new vision further integrating the dimensions related to regional and international cooperation. In that regard, Benin is seeking technical assistance from its partners, because it wants to capitalize on the experiences of other countries to refine our strategy.

In conclusion, allow me to recall the principled position of my country against capital punishment in general and against the imposition of the death penalty for matters linked to drug trafficking in particular. The use of the death penalty violates the provisions of article 6, paragraph 2, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We therefore encourage all States to identify in their positive law alternative penalties for those who are found guilty of such trafficking.

(*spoke in English*)

I now resume my functions as Acting President of the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/314, of 1 July 2004, I call on His Excellency Archbishop Bernardito Cleopas Auza, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): My delegation welcomes the convening of this special session on the world drug problem and wishes to thank all those who participated in the preparatory process leading to this special session.

The Holy See firmly rejects the use of illegal drugs and the legalization of the use of narcotics. In his address to the thirty-first edition of the International Drug Enforcement Conference, Pope Francis affirmed that a reduction in the spread and influence of drug addiction will not be achieved by a liberalization of drug use; rather, it is necessary to confront the problems underlying the use of these drugs by promoting greater justice, educating young people in the values that build up life in society, and accompanying those in

difficulty and giving them hope for the future. For the Holy See, attempts, however limited, to legalize so-called recreational drugs are not only questionable from a legislative standpoint, but they fail to produce the desired effect.

In addition, His Holiness Pope Francis insisted that the fight against drugs cannot be won with drugs. Drugs are an evil and with evil there can be neither surrender nor compromise. In saying "no" to every type of drug use, we must at the same time say "yes" to life, "yes" to love, "yes" to others, "yes" to education, "yes" to greater job opportunities. If we say "yes" to all these things, there will be no room for illicit drugs, for alcohol abuse, for other forms of addiction.

The Holy See cannot emphasize enough the importance of the family as the cornerstone of prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, reintegration and health strategies. The family forms the very basis of society. When a member is addicted, the whole family suffers. The grave consequences of substance abuse by family members lead in so many cases to imbalance in household relationships and place severe strain on family life. The negative effect of illicit drug use on the family extends to the community and leads ultimately to the destabilization of civil society.

Research continually reinforces the key role that the family plays in the fight against drug abuse, as it confirms that the core principles of social interaction are learned in the home. Those children who have nurturing families generally receive the education necessary to help them say "no" to illicit drugs. The scourges associated with the production and trafficking of illegal drugs exist because of the demand of addicted individuals. Therefore, educating our children and young people about the harm of drug abuse is one important element in the fight against drugs on the demand side. Even within families with strong ties in communities living harmoniously and peacefully, some individuals sadly do fall into drug abuse. They, too, need the support and care of their family and community.

Not all crimes related to illicit drugs are of equal gravity. International drug traffickers, local pushers and drug users have to be treated differently according to the principle of proportionality. Disproportionate responses would be against the spirit of justice and would not help in the rehabilitation of those who have become addicted to illicit drugs.

The drug problem and its related evils transcend borders and affect citizens worldwide. Hence international cooperation towards an integrated and balanced strategy is required in order to counter them. The most basic understanding of human dignity compels the international community, particularly through the norms and mechanisms of international law, to do all that it can to protect all citizens of the world from the scourge of illicit drugs.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/78 of 6 December 2007, I now call on the observer of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

Mr. Al-Zahrani (Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the members of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf.

I would like to thank representatives for the work they have done in preparing the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex). We shall work together with the international community to ensure a positive outcome for this special session with regard to our common responsibility to combat the world drug problem. We also appreciate the part played by the United Nations in combating drugs through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, as well as the training programme and technical support it provides to States.

The States of the Cooperation Council of the States of the Arabian Gulf have carefully studied the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, which is the document on how to tackle the issue of drugs at the global level. We would like to assure the Assembly that we will continue to implement the Plan for 2009 to 2019, which was adopted in the Political Declaration. We will fully discharge our obligations under the three international conventions on narcotic drugs and all other instruments relating to the problem. I also assure the Assembly that we greatly appreciate the work carried out by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which is the body par excellence on developing strategies and inputs related to the world drug problem.

The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council have always been pioneers in the area of providing protection against drugs. We have developed plans for how to address this problem as part of our integrated strategies to achieve peace, security and the economic

well-being of our citizens. Accordingly, we in the Gulf Cooperation Council attach special importance, like all other countries in the world, to tackling the problem and reducing the supply and demand of narcotic drugs and other psychoactive substances.

Drug abuse has increased in recent years for many different reasons, including greater production of crops that are used to produce illicit drugs throughout the world. In the Gulf Cooperation Council, we have worked closely with international organizations to develop balanced national strategies to combat the scourge of drugs and reduce supply and demand, which are so harmful to our societies. We will continue our work to that end, which will also help us address terrorism, extreme violence and money-laundering. However, international cooperation is needed to tackle those problems successfully.

Illicit trafficking is a capital offence under our laws, in accordance with the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. We have done our utmost in the Gulf Cooperation Council to promote bilateral and international efforts to stamp out drug trafficking and related crimes. We established the Criminal Information Center to Combat Drugs, which has its headquarters in Doha. We therefore have a single body for addressing narcotic drugs and other, illegal psychoactive substances.

We regret that trafficking in illegal drugs, which has a deleterious effect on human beings, appears to be increasing. It is hindering the full implementation of the three international conventions. Every State is sovereign and can enact its own laws. There have been repeated requests to abolish the death penalty for certain crimes. The death penalty is proportionate to the crime because of the crime's extremely devastating consequences. We believe in a common and diversified responsibility.

In conclusion, allow me to say that we appreciate the work carried out by UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board. We also appreciate the regional efforts the United Nations is making to combat the scourge of drugs.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 48/2, of 13 October 1993, I now call on the observer for the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Mr. Sabzevari (Economic Cooperation Organization): It is a great pleasure for me to represent the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) at the General Assembly's special session on the world drug problem.

The outcome document of this important special session (resolution S-30/1, annex) has given a role to regional undertakings in the implementation of its operational recommendations on addressing the global drug menace, which is of great relevance to the ECO region, which is one of the most drug-affected regions in the world, in the areas not only of drug demand and supply but also of transit and trafficking.

ECO is an intergovernmental regional organization that, in the past three decades, has offered a regional platform for enhancing the economic growth, prosperity and welfare of its 10 member States and their peoples. With a territory of 8 million square kilometres and 450 million inhabitants, ECO is a region that neighbours on China, Europe, Russia and the Persian Gulf. ECO has developed a wide range of regional cooperation frameworks in various economic and social sectors whose success depends on having an environment at the national and regional level that is conducive to success.

The world drug problem continues to threaten the regional viability of economic development and social welfare in some parts of the ECO region. That is why ECO member States, while collectively striving for enhanced economic development, have given due attention to the need to address the challenges associated with the drug problem.

The ECO Secretary General, in his statement at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, eloquently elaborated on how we in the ECO secretariat see the coming years after this special session. I would like to inform the special session that ECO has already developed frameworks, partnerships and networking within the region and with the international community, in line with the objectives of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action. Those initiatives also support the implementation of the operational recommendations of this session's outcome document in our region, including in the areas of supply reduction and law enforcement as well as alternative development.

A European Union-funded project on the fight against trafficking was recently implemented through collaboration with agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, where capacity-building and

technical-assistance programmes have been conducted in various sectors and corners of the region. ECO member States have also adopted collective measures in the areas of law enforcement and supply and demand reduction. ECO is in the process of establishing an ECO police organization, which we are calling ECOPOL, as well as a regional centre for anti-corruption cooperation. Moreover, the Attorneys General of the ECO member States have recently embarked on collective attempts to establish regional frameworks for judicial and legal assistance cooperation. Some regional platforms for drug-related data exchange and analysis have also been developed.

ECO is now developing its 10-year vision document addressing regional socioeconomic realities and needs in line with the global agenda, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals. Opportunities emerging from the implementation of the outcomes of this special session may also be utilized by ECO to support its member States in realizing the ECO 10-year vision.

Commitments by the international community at this special session to strengthen international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility provides opportunities for potential partnerships with ECO in order to more effectively address the drug problem in our region. We hope that the international community, and the United Nations in particular, will continue to recognize ECO's relevance, needs and requirements in that regard, as well as the imperative of ECO's remaining involved in global development-oriented drug policies and measures, since ECO is an already existing platform where global commitments can be translated into regional measures and achievements in its part of the world.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 51/1, of 15 October 1996, I now call on the observer for the International Criminal Police Organization.

Mr. Roux (International Criminal Police Organization): I thank the President for giving the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), an observer to the United Nations, the opportunity to speak at this important milestone session on fighting the world drug problem. The Special Session on the world drug problem provides an ideal opportunity to revisit the particularities and challenges posed by that global problem.

INTERPOL fully welcomes the introductory remarks by the President of the General Assembly, the Under-Secretary-General, the Chair of the special session's Board, and the many Member States that have mentioned the link between drugs and organized crime and corruption as well as the link to human trafficking and terrorism. Building operational capacity and providing assistance to law enforcement in order to effectively tackle the world drug problem must be done strategically and globally, combining frontline enforcement and intelligence gathering. For those purposes, it is crucial that all actors truly work together in a collaborative process.

INTERPOL, as the only global police organization, can facilitate international law-enforcement cooperation in three ways. First, INTERPOL provides unique communication tools and databases so as to enable communication in real time and information-sharing related to drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Secondly, INTERPOL can provide the training and expertise to build up that operational capacity. INTERPOL can provide both field and online training to law enforcement in order to ensure the most effective use of our tools and services. Thirdly, INTERPOL can also identify new trafficking techniques, emerging trends and criminal links through crime analysis.

As law enforcement worldwide finds itself now having to deal with more complex transnational crimes in addition to traditional drug trafficking, resources once committed to combating drug trafficking are now stretched into other areas. INTERPOL can help countries maximize what resources they have and target them in order to get optimal results by providing operational and investigative support. INTERPOL policing capabilities are offered at the local, regional and global levels in the context of drug-trafficking operations and investigations. If assistance is required, INTERPOL provides support in real time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and deploys experts to requesting member countries. As an organization designed to enable secure law-enforcement communication across its 190 member countries, information-sharing is at the heart of INTERPOL by means of its privileged structure with its headquarters in Lyon, France, large offices in Singapore and Buenos Aires, our seven regional bureaus, and even an office right across from the United Nations Secretariat here in New York.

INTERPOL, built to deliver and provide support, is proud to be an active partner in the current special

session process and is strongly committed to further contributing to the substantial efforts of the session.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/50, of 2 December 2004, I now give the floor to the observer of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Mr. Zhankuliev (Collective Security Treaty Organization) (*spoke in Russian*): I greet the Assembly on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). I would like to express my thanks for the invitation to such an important and extremely well-organized forum.

Since the General Assembly met to discuss drugs in 1998, the situation of drug trafficking has hardly changed for the better. Unfortunately, the affected States and international organizations have seldom managed to cooperate effectively in dealing with the drug problem.

In our view, the main problems impacting the effectiveness of the fight against the world drug problem include the following. The competent bodies have had limited modern technological tools to uncover drug smuggling. Moreover, the mechanism of national drug-control laws is unwieldy, In addition, there has been insufficient interdepartmental cooperation within individual States. The actions taken by international bodies have taken have not been connected. For more than 20 years, one of the chief problems for the CSTO has been the narcotic drugs coming from Afghanistan. Although drug production in Afghanistan dropped in 2015, the amount of drugs flowing into the territories of our member States has not decreased. Another problem is the increase in the illegal trafficking of so-called designer drugs that contain synthetic cannabinoids in smoking blends. Today, the circulation of such substances is comparable to the trafficking in heroin.

Therefore, we try to concentrate on developing and taking comprehensive anti-drug measures within the framework of the CSTO. Our Parliamentary Assembly is working on harmonizing the legislation of our member States in combating drug trafficking. The CSTO Collective Security Council has developed an anti-drug strategy for member States for the period up to the year 2020. For more than 10 years, we have had a Coordinating Council of competent authorities to combat illicit drug trafficking. Within that Council, we have working groups to exchange information and provide training to ensure interdepartmental cooperation in the area of prevention. We have also developed scientific and consultative groups. In addition, we are developing a joint databank within the Coordinating Council. Each year, we provide an analysis of the drug situation within our member States.

We are continuing to work on an anti-drug project called Canal, through which we work out new algorithms and anti-drug activities to prevent trafficking. We have a collective rapid reaction force in the CSTO, including special units from Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, to fight drugs. From 26 August to 3 September 2015 in Tajikistan, under the coordination of the Coordinating Council, the Drug Control Agency of the Office of the President of Tajikistan and the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation, we held a two-phase counter-narcotics exercise called Grom-2015. The second phase of that exercise took place in Tajikistan along the Tajik-Afghan border. Four composite units from the collective rapid reaction force participated in raids and ambush-search operations, and two mixed checkpoints inspected transport on the main roads usually used by drug couriers. Helicopters and drones of the 201st military base of the Ministry of Defence in Russia covered the raid operations of those composite units. The Tajik border guards also provided invaluable assistance.

Moreover, in 2015, we held the special anti-drug Operation Canal-Patrol and Operation Canal-Synthetic-Post, with international headquarters in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, and in Vladivostok, Russia. During Operation Canal-Patrol, in difficult weather conditions and at heights of 4,500 metres above sea level, composite units of Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan carried out tactical-combat patrolling of the smuggling routes along the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. We had observers from Afghanistan, Iran, China, Thailand, India, INTERPOL, the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, the Coordinating service of the Council of Border Troop Commanders from the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. During that exercise, we were able to seize about 35 tons of narcotic and psychoactive substances, 672 firearms and 11,000 units of ammunition. We reported all of this to the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

This year, we are planning more large-scale counter-drug-trafficking operations, and we look forward to having participation of partners that are not actually CSTO members. We intend in future to work on

the following: preventing precursors from falling into the hands of the criminal drug industry, establishing a mechanism to quickly establish control over new psychoactive substances, strengthening the relationship between law enforcement bodies and the armed forces, preventing the use of modern information technology by drug traffickers, better organizing efforts to reduce the demand for drugs, developing partnerships with drug-treatment services and social organizations to reduce demand, and strengthening international cooperation overall.

We call on all interested States and international organizations to work closely together in this area. We wish the General Assembly every success at this session.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 253 (III), of 16 October 1948, I now call on the observer of the Organization of American States.

Mr. Koncke (Organization of American States) (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) considers that the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly presents an opportunity to assess of the path taken by the international community, the Organization of American States and the region with regard to the world drug problem. From that assessment come at least two considerations: the vanguard leadership assumed by the region, represented by the member States of the OAS, and the opportunity provided by this debate.

As is known, at the close of the Sixth Summit of the Americas, held in Cartagena de Indias on 15 April 2012, the Organization of American States received an explicit mandate from the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to analyse the results of the current drug policy and to explore new approaches. It was considered that there was no single problem but multiple problems that impact the countries of the region in diverse forms and at different levels of intensity, given the diverse realities, conditions, capacities and institutional frameworks present in each country. Therefore, the General Secretariat of the OAS believes that a single, universal approach applicable to all cases is neither viable nor effective. On the contrary, what is needed is a certain degree of flexibility that can adapt to the diversity with which the issue affects each country.

The 2013 OAS report on the drug problem in the Americas marked a turning point in the regional debate and also had an impact on the discussion at the global level. It was followed by a series of positions taken by the representatives of member States at the highest political level of the OAS, which resulted in an outline of the elements of a comprehensive, balanced and multidimensional approach to tackling the drug problem. Priority was attached to the human person rather than to substances. Criminalization yielded ground to prevention, treatment and the rehabilitation of the individual.

The President took the Chair.

The OAS will continue to work on drug policies in an open and constructive spirit and with the critical thinking with which it has been working to date. That will equip all available inter-American forums to make progress in the discusion, to exchange knowledge and experience, to learn from initiatives carried out and to identify, based on evidence, what is functioning effectively and efficiently in tackling the various aspects of the problem in the countries of the region.

In that spirit the Organization of American States offers the community of nations, meeting in the special session of the General Assembly, the experience and progress it has achieved. My delegation will provide the Secretariat with a reference document on the drug problem in the Americas that we hope can serve as input for future work, a basis for reflection and a source of possible initiatives.

It is our belief that while the special session of 2016 has represented a relevant moment in addressing the world drug problem, it is our duty to persist in seeking initiatives that will place people and their well-being at the centre of the discussion. We continuously promote the human rights perspective and the vision that no drug policy can be compatible with violating the rights of persons — first and before anything else, the right to life, but also, especially, the human rights of women, children and the vulnerable groups who must remain the subject of our continuous attention and effort.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/181, of 17 December 2015, I now call on the representative of civil society, the Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association.

Ms. Ali (Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association): I want to share my brother's story — a common one in low- and middle-income countries. In 1991 my brother, Harun, was diagnosed with leukemia

at the age of 31. His last two weeks were horrific. His three children remember that Baba was always in pain. As a young physician, I felt helpless to relieve his pain. Injectable pethidine was the only opioid then available in Kenya, but his doctor refused to use it. Our beloved Harun lingered in extreme pain. I held his hand as he died, but I was haunted long after by anger and guilt.

Why was my brother, like millions of others, denied access to adequate pain relief? Because the substances needed to treat his pain, recognized as essential medicines by the World Health Organization (WHO), are also subject to control under the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Morphine, for example, is the gold standard for the treatment of severe pain and is included in the WHO Essential Medicines List under the universal right to health. Under the universal right to health, essential medicines must always be accessible, available, and affordable. Yet the International Narcotics Control Board estimates that 85 per cent of the world population have no access to pain medications. Efforts to create a drug-free world have resulted in a profound imbalance in policy and significant harm, leaving many millions in pain or with substance-use disorders without the medicines they need.

As representatives of civil society, we call for a different approach. The African Union Common Position recognizes that the world drug problem requires an integrated approach to drug supply and to demand reduction and harm reduction strategies, as well as ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific use. It calls for greater support to ensure the provision of opiates and other essential and controlled medicines for palliative care and pain relief. Governments, drug-law enforcement and health sectors must collaborate to ensure that vision, reallocate resources for palliative care and drug dependence, and pursue alternative solutions for minor offences.

Kenya has come a long way since my brother's painful death. Kenya's National Patients' Right Charter now recognizes palliative care and pain relief as a human right. Kenya's Ministry of Health purchased 50 kilograms of morphine for distribution to hospices and public hospitals this year. This is just about 10 per cent of what is needed in Kenya. Yet the vast majority of countries in the world, including Kenya, still face barriers, including lack of knowledge and skills among health care providers, attitudes, punitive laws, lack of public awareness, and poverty.

Knowing that their disease may not be treated, patients suffer psychological and physical pain, which violates the essence of their humanity. We must not wait until we ourselves, or our dearly beloved relatives, like my brother, are stricken. We in this Hall, this week, have the will, compassion and expertise to ensure progress towards universal access to pain relief. We all have a duty to end unnecessary suffering, and we should start today.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/181, of 17 December 2015, I now call on the representative of civil society of the Forut-Campaign for Solidarity and Development of Norway.

Mr. Endal (Forut-Campaign for Solidarity and Development): I have chosen four key words for my brief intervention today. The four words are: action, development, mobilization and prevention.

Taking action now is a challenge for us all — Member States, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations alike. All of us must use the years leading up to 2019 for national and local action and policy implementation. It is simple. The outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) offers an excellent strategy for a comprehensive, balanced and effective policy to reduce both drug use and its related harm. The document contains a long menu of effective interventions that will reduce drug-related harm — if those words are turned into action. Some claim that everything has been tried and that nothing works. One could not be more mistaken. The reality is that we know a lot about what works. The problem is rather that too many countries have failed in using too many of the most effective policy options.

Using the next three years in a continuing struggle over words will not make a big difference for those who suffer. Three years of evidence-based interventions will make a big difference. We therefore appeal to all national delegations to go home, pick a few — or pick the best — interventions that have the greatest potential for prevention and treatment and then implement them forcefully.

As to prevention, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime International Standards on Drug Use Prevention offers a wide range of evidence-based primary prevention interventions. It cannot be repeated too often: prevention is effective, humane, cost-effective and even empowering for people. Therefore, prevent; do not promote. We must mobilize citizens and

communities. Even the most powerful Governments or leaders cannot succeed alone. We need citizens and local communities on board. Experience from all over the world shows that prevention efforts really do work when they are implemented by local communities.

But for that purpose we will need an extra take-home message addressed to the ordinary people of the world from this meeting — something big and ambitious, something that could perhaps set some hearts on fire and mobilize people and involve local communities. The special session should invite local communities all over the world to join in a global wave of prevention. If we tried, we could reach one million communities before 2019. That would make a big difference.

Lastly, there is development. Social and economic development must be at the core of any drug strategy. We now see that alternative development programmes show promising results. These programmes need increased support from the international community. Donor countries should increase their funding and see that as a long-term commitment.

We hope that the 2016 special session will prove to be a turning point, the point where we shift gears from discussions to taking action. That is also the best way we can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. I appreciate this opportunity and wish "good luck" to all who are present.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/181, of 17 December 2015, I now call on the representative of the HIV/AIDS Alliance of India.

Mr. Sharma (HIV/AIDS Alliance of Inida): My name is Charanjit Sharma. I am from Manipur, a state in northern India. I work with India HIV/AIDS Alliance and am also the Secretary of the Indian Drug Users Forum.

I am here today because harm reduction saved my life. But I have many friends who were not as fortunate. Their lives were lost simply because they could not access harm-reduction services when they required them. We of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance family are reaching close to 300,000 people who use drugs with community-based HIV and harm-reduction services annually in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. That gives us a unique perspective on what it takes to prevent HIV and hepatitis C and what it takes to get treatment to people who inject drugs.

I have witnessed at first hand the negative impact of prohibition and the fallout of law enforcement as a mechanism of drug control. I have seen police action against drug users and have myself been subjected to exploitation, violence and detention for simply being suspected of using an illicit drug. As drug users, we are soft and easy targets for law enforcement, while big players remain elusive. The drug trade continues despite harmful efforts to control it, and we pay the price.

I know from personal experience the devastating consequences of forced drug treatment and entirely ineffective rehabilitation programmes. I have friends who have been tortured and publicly humiliated for days and weeks in the name of treatment. I know too many people incarcerated for years for possession of a small amount of drugs for personal use. Is that justice? Is it fair? Is it humane? Will it help to end AIDS? Widespread criminalization and punishment of people who use drugs confirms that the war on drugs is, in fact, a war on drug users, a war on people, a war on us.

On behalf of the people who use drugs in India, in Asia and in every country around the world, I appeal for placing the health, rights and security of people who use drugs at the centre of international and national drug policy. I appeal to those present to understand that policy is informed by evidence of what works: accessible, holistic, people-centred services that are tailored to the needs of the people who use drugs.

I appeal to Member States to stop arresting and incarcerating people for the consumption and possession of drugs for personal use. The death penalty for drug-related offences must be abolished. I appeal to the Assembly to support drug users and the organizations working with us, and to improve access to HIV and hepatitis C treatment and overdose services. Support drug users meaningful participation in the design and implementation of harm-reduction services.

Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan recognized the failure of the war on drugs. He recently stated that we need to accept that a drug-free world is an illusion, and that we must focus instead on ensuring that drugs cause the least possible harm. Harm reduction saved my life. Harm reduction saves lives. When lives are saved, communities thrive. When communities thrive, nations prosper. We cannot end AIDS until we scale up harm reduction and end the criminalization of drug users. We must support, not punish.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/181, of 17 December 2015, I now call on the representative of the Drug Foundation of New Zealand.

Mr. Potiki (Drug Foundation of New Zealand) (*spoke in Maori; English text provided by the delegation*): I greet you all. Waitaki is my river, Kai Tahu is my tribe, Ōtākou is my home place. I greet you all as Chiefs. I greet the First Nations people of this place.

(*spoke in English*)

Sometimes, when we are threatened, we go to war, and sometimes we go to war against the wrong people. If we decided to wage a war against cancer, would we do that by bombing the people who have cancer? Many nations have joined up to wage a war against drugs and have ended up attacking and harming people who really are in need of our help and support.

I started using drugs when I was 13 years old. When I was 28 years old, a judge gave me a choice — get help for my drug problem or go to jail. That was 27 years ago. I had a judge who could see that the reason I kept standing before him was ultimately because of my drug use. He could see that I needed a health intervention rather than a criminal justice one. He sent me to treatment for my drug problem.

And because treatment works, I stand here today as Chair of the New Zealand Drug Foundation, Director of Maori Development at the University of Otago and having not used drugs for 27 years. My journey was supported by my predecessor and by essential harm-reduction services, including opioid substitution therapy with methadone. It also included screening and then treatment for hepatitis C.

Those present are here to discuss the world drug problem, but many directly contribute to that problem by denying their citizens access to vital support, such as harm reduction — the support that saved my life — thereby actively blocking progress towards provision of help to those who most need it. I believe that if you are not a part of the solution then you are a part of the problem, and that the major part of the world drug problem is those countries that continue to block progress towards compassionate, proportionate and health-focused responses to drug use and drug users.

The first thing I ask for in standing before the Assembly today is to stop punishing people who are in need of our help. We must stop criminalizing people who need our care and support. I am Kai Tahu, Maori, from Ōtākou, Te Waipounamu, New Zealand. We are the first people of that land. We have a history of colonization, dispossession and deprivation, and deprivation has consequences.

When we focus only on drug use and the problems that people present, when we do not ask questions about the broader picture — about the why — we can miss so much. My problems did not start the day I picked up a needle. They went much further back. That is a story we will hear many, many times, particularly from indigenous people. In New Zealand, Maori make up 15 per cent of the population as a whole but 51 per cent of our prison population — and 40 per cent of those are there for drug offences. We see the same patterns in Australian aboriginals, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and Alaskans and indigenous peoples all over the world — patterns of high levels of drug use and drug-related harm. That is no accident.

As indigenous people, we have the solutions to our problems, including our drug problems. In the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) for the special session, the Assembly rightly acknowledges the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. But that puts obligations on the Assembly to include us in discussions and policy decisions that affect us. So I ask that from this special session forward, the unique perspectives and views of indigenous and First Nations peoples be sought out and included.

Lastly, if there is a war to be fought — and I believe that there is — it should be a war on poverty, disparity, dispossession and the multitude of political and historical factors that have left, and continue to leave, so many people vulnerable and in jeopardy. We must also acknowledge that the people we are all talking about here are our sons, our daughters, our brothers and our sisters. If we think just for a minute about how we would want our sons and daughters to be treated if they developed a problem with drugs, the way forward becomes very, very clear.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/181, I now call on Ms. Hamda Alsabbagh, a Fazza youth representative of civil society from the United Arab Emirates.

Ms. Alsabbagh (United Arab Emirates): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this amazing opportunity to address the General Assembly.

In view of the fact that the main goal of this special session is achieving a better tomorrow for the world's youth, I would like to present to the Assembly some of the conclusions that we, a group of youth leaders from 27 countries, arrived at during the fourth annual Youth Forum, held in Vienna a month ago under the auspices of the Youth Initiative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, with the aim of empowering young people and making their voice heard in high-level discussions. We worked together for two days, sharing and analysing experiences and envisioning solutions to a problem that has a particularly marked effect on our peers. I urge the Assembly to take them into consideration.

Our experiences tell us us as young people that factors such as abuse, bad parenting, the influence of the media, poverty and mental-health problems can lead our peers to start using drugs and increase the likelihood of negative consequences. We strongly believe that since people suffering from drug-use disorders have no control over such factors, they must not be stigmatized. Only treatment, followed by reintegration through social support, is in line with the large amount of scientific data on the subject, as well as our moral consciences.

The consequences of substance use are dire. Few of us think that drugs are harmless or fun. We know, for instance, that substance use restricts the education, career and life paths of affected individuals. Our experiences as youth leaders involved in prevention in different parts of the world have shown us that prevention measures work, and the research evidence agrees. For the sake of protecting public health, it is vital that we implement such evidence-based measures. Merely distributing scare-mongering information on the dangers of drugs is not effective. We have all agreed that other measures, such as providing support to families, offering counselling in schools and giving extra support to the children who are most vulnerable, are more valuable.

The dedication and efforts of young people can yield positive outcomes. We are committed to providing information and education to our peers, to equipping young people with the social skills they need to resist social pressures, and to helping our peers find their own talents and passions. We are committed to empowering them to believe in themselves and to supporting human connection rather than isolation. We are engaged and enthusiastic, and we want to positively shape our future.

Please do not see young people only as victims, but rather as rich sources of information — and, most importantly, as drivers of change.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/181, I now call on the representative of the Association Pro Coalitions of Brazil.

Ms. Marcondes (Association Pro Coalitions of Brazil): I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to take part in this year's important special session on the world drug problem.

I am speaking today on behalf of the Association Pro Coalitions of Brazil, an umbrella organization that is a partner of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), a non-governmental organization that builds community coalitions in the United States and more than 20 other countries around the world.

Today, I would like to describe the importance of the involvement of organized civil society in the prevention of drug use by children and adolescents in communities in my country of Brazil. Eight years ago in São Paulo, Brazil's most important and populous state, we held a series of CADCA training sessions on our evidence-based approach to community mobilization, which enables local leaders, adolescents, young people, health workers and other local institutions and organizations to come together to build a comprehensive, community-wide prevention strategy that integrates every kind of sector and promotes healthy behaviours. It works to change environments that are vulnerable to drugs and crime, targeting the health and safety of adolescents, young people and all the residents of a community for short-, medium- and long-term outcomes.

Based on my experience in implementing community coalitions in a number of cities all over Brazil, I have learned that we need to create local solutions to local problems. We have to integrate residents, Government, parents, religious leaders, teachers, the judiciary, police, young people and other community members in efforts to assess which substances pose the biggest problems and to identify the population in a particular community that is most affected by them, in order to

then work together to develop, plan and execute actions for strategic prevention. Before we developed such community coalitions in Brazil, those sectors were working in isolation and duplicating their preventive actions. That has now changed in the communities where we have coalitions.

The impact in the cities that have such community coalitions organized by civil society according to this methodology — which has been evaluated in partnership with various universities in Brazil — is visible in those cities in reduced rates among adolescents of access to and availability of drugs. In my community of Pindamonhangaba, the availability of alcohol and access to it are 35 per cent lower than the national average, thanks to interventions by our community coalition, and that is in a country that has unfortunately witnessed increased drug use in many communities.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.

While we utilized a methodology developed here in the United States, we adapted it to fit the realities of Brazilian culture and society. We now have Brazilian community coalitions that are continuing to grow and expand, even in the difficult times we are currently dealing with in my country. I would also like to stress the importance of youth leadership in our coalitions. We involve youth in all aspects of our work, and we believe that we are developing youth leadership today and the future leaders of tomorrow.

I would like to conclude by pointing out that, like many countries in the region, we Brazilians do very little in the way of drug prevention, and our treatment system is inadequate to the needs created by our growing problems with drug use. According to recent research done at the University of São Paulo, there are more than a million crack users in Brazil. I believe that we must continue to increase the resources that we devote to the prevention of drug use and recognize that prevention is the most cost-effective way to ensure that our drug policies protect the young people of all our nations.

Agenda item 3

Credentials of representatives to the special session of the General Assembly

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee (A/S-30/5)

The Acting President: I now request the Chair of the Credentials Committee, His Excellency Mr. Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, to introduce the report of the Credentials Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Kickert (Austria), Chair of the Credentials Committee: On behalf of the Credentials Committee, I have the honour to introduce the report of the Committee concerning the credentials of the representatives of Member States to the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, contained in document A/S-30/5.

Having considered the credentials of the representatives at its meeting on 20 April 2016, the Credentials Committee adopted without a vote a draft resolution accepting the credentials. The Committee also recommended that the plenary of the special session adopt the draft resolution concerning the credentials of representatives to the current special session of the General Assembly, contained in paragraph 14 of the report of the Committee.

I would like to note that, since the meeting of the Credentials Committee, formal credentials in the form required by rule 27 of the Assembly's rules of procedure were received by the secretariat of the Credentials Committee regarding Belarus, Grenada, Guatemala, Kuwait and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, since the meeting of the Credentials Committee, the secretariat has received information through other means concerning the appointment of representatives to the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly in respect of Serbia. The special session is therefore requested to adopt the draft resolution approving the report of the Credentials Committee and the additional credentials submitted subsequent to the Committee's meeting.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Committee and to the secretariat for facilitating our work.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee entitled "Credentials of representatives to the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly", contained in document A/S-30/5. May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution without a vote?

Draft resolution A/S-30/5 was adopted (resolution S-30/2).

Closure of the session

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/181, we shall now hear summaries by the Chairs of the round tables.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pedro Moitinho de Almeida, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations in Vienna and co-Chair of round table I, held on Tuesday afternoon, 19 April.

Mr. Moitinho de Almeida (Portugal), co-Chair, round table I: It is my pleasure to present the co-Chairs' summary of the salient points of round table I, "Demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion", which was held on 19 April from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The round table was co-chaired by Mr. Ravindra Fernando, Chairman of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board of Sri Lanka, and myself. The salient points, summarized by the co-Chairs, are as follows.

Many speakers commended the ongoing shift towards a people-centred public-health approach to addressing the world drug problem, acknowledging that drug use and drug disorders are complex and represent chronic health issues that can and should be prevented and treated through intervention and service based on scientific evidence and human rights. In that context, it was recognized by a number of speakers that efforts must be strongly reinforced, particularly with regard to collaboration among various sectors at both the national and the local levels; training and qualifications for service providers; and budget investments, with a view to meeting Sustainable Development Goal 3.5, on strengthening prevention and treatment.

Speakers emphasized the importance of strengthening commitment to our common and shared responsibility for addressing the world drug problem. Reference was also made to the need for enhanced cooperation among United Nations entities, particularly the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Narcotics Control Board and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Statements drew attention to a spectrum of evidence-based interventions that are being implemented with success and that should be scaled up, including in the areas of education on and the prevention of drug use; accessible services for preventing HIV, hepatitis C and other blood-borne diseases; and overdoses, in the case of, for example, naloxone; and psychosocial and pharmacological treatment, as well as rehabilitation services aimed at recovery.

It was mentioned that special attention should be paid to reaching and providing services to particularly vulnerable groups, including women, children, young people and people with co-morbid mental-health disorders and in prison settings. In that context, several speakers commended the *International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders* (E/CN.7/2016/CRP.4), recently published by UNODC and WHO. In addition, the necessity of providing health and social care, treatment, reintegration and recovery-oriented services to drug users, as an alternative to criminal-justice sanctions, was emphasized. Furthermore, problems, including the non-medical use of prescription drugs, were mentioned by several delegations, as well as, in one case, the need to develop treatment and harm-reduction options for stimulant users.

It was also highlighted that the 2011 target of reaching a 50 per cent reduction by 2015 in new HIV infections among people who inject drugs has been missed. Reference was made to the fact that the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals target 3.3 calls for ending AIDS as a public-health problem by 2030, including among people who inject drugs in prison settings. That has also been endorsed by the 2016 outcome document for the special session (resolution S-30/1, annex) just adopted.

A number of speakers stressed that scientific and economic arguments in support of ending AIDS among people who use drugs by 2030 were available. Reference was made to the fact that national drug policies and strategies should be grounded in science, public health, human rights and gender-responsiveness. Other issues mentioned included the following: addressing the stigma and discrimination against people who use drugs; developing alternatives to criminalization for drug use and drug possession for personal use; and the urgent scaling up of harm-reduction services, particularly opioid-substitution therapy, needle-syringe programmes, anti-retroviral therapy, as defined by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in the technical guide of 2012, in the community and in prison settings. It was further mentioned that those measures needed to be

matched by the allocation of resources, both domestic and international, based on prioritization and efficiency.

Finally, many speakers reiterated their commitment under the three international drug control conventions to ensuring the availability of controlled substance for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion, misuse and abuse. It was recognized that there was a high degree of discrepancy between high-, low- and middle-income countries in terms of ensuring the availability of drugs for medical and scientific purposes, including pain management and palliative care. In that context, reference was made to the value of multisectoral approaches in addressing existing barriers and in alleviating the pain and needless suffering of patients.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Carmen María Gallardo Hernández, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations in Vienna and co-Chair of round table II, which was held on Wednesday morning, 20 April.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador), co-Chair, round table II: It is my great pleasure to present the co-Chairs' summary of the salient points of round table II, entitled "Supply reduction and related measures; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation", which was held on 20 April. Round table II was co-chaired by Mr. Tayeb Louh, Minister for Justice of Algeria, and myself. The salient points summarized by the co-Chairs are the following.

Several speakers highlighted the need to strengthen law-enforcement cooperation at the regional, subregional and international levels, including meaningful cross-border cooperation, the sharing of criminal intelligence and judicial cooperation, such as for extradition and mutual legal assistance.

The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its related Protocols and the United Nations Convention against Corruption were cited by many speakers as providing a strong legal basis for efforts by Member States to target criminal organizations and the range of criminal activities relating to drug trafficking. Several speakers commended the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), including the UNODC-World Customs Organization Global Container Control Programme.

A number of speakers highlighted the importance of tracing the illicit financial flows related to drug trafficking, among others, and emphasized the need for financial-investigation training to combat money-laundering. The need to address existing challenges to efforts to reduce the illicit supply of controlled drugs within the framework of the international drug-control conventions was further stressed. Many speakers noted that a comprehensive and balanced approach to implementing the international drug-control conventions was needed, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

The importance of proportionate sentencing and of alternatives to imprisonment, including treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare for those who suffer drug disorders was also noted by a number of speakers. In that regard, collaboration and coordination among criminal-justice institutions and with other relevant institutions, such as health-care providers and community-based prevention and treatment actors were considered an essential element in an effective criminal-justice responses. Some speakers stressed that successful law-enforcement efforts proved to be those that are primarily aimed at dismantling organized and violent criminal groups, including, in some cases, gangs. Several speakers highlighted the growing link between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, including money-laundering, corruption, the financing of terrorism and trafficking in firearms, which represent a threat to world peace and security.

Some speakers noted that transit countries needed targeted strategies to deal with their specific problems. Several speakers noted that organized criminal groups increasingly used the Internet to facilitate drug trafficking, and they highlighted the need for programmes that support capacity-building and technical assistance for investigating and prosecuting such crimes.

Many speakers recognized the growing threat and global availability of new psychoactive substances, emphasizing the need for international cooperation to address the problem. With a view to addressing the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances, speakers emphasized the importance of information-sharing at the regional and international

levels and of improving the forensic profiling of the substances concerned.

The need to maintain effective control over precursor chemicals and pre-precursors and to monitor and prevent diversion from licit sources was highlighted by many speakers. Another point made was that legal differences should not impede international cooperation. Several speakers noted that alternative development efforts had yielded good results, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, supported by strong cooperation at the international level, including through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. A number of speakers also highlighted the importance of addressing the challenges faced by farmers following the eradication of crops.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Pascal Strupler, Secretary of State of Switzerland and co-Chair of round table III, held on Wednesday afternoon, 20 April.

Mr. Strupler (Switzerland), co-Chair, round table III (*spoke in French*): The work of the co-Chairs having been done in English, I will address the Assembly in English.

(spoke in English)

It is my great pleasure to present the co-Chairs' summary of the salient points of round table III, entitled "Cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities", which was held on 20 April 2016. Round table III was co-chaired by Mr. Karoly Dan, the Vice-Chair of the Board for the General Assembly special sessions and myself. The co-Chairs' summary of the salient points that I will be presenting was not itself subject to negotiation. The salient points summarized by the co-Chairs are as follows.

Many speakers representing Member States, civil-society organizations and United Nations entities welcomed the convening of a round table dedicated to discussing human rights as they relate to the world drug problem. In that regard, a number of speakers noted with appreciation the references to the section on human rights in the outcome document of this special session (A/S-30/1, annex).

In the course of the discussion, references were made to the right to life, the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, access to controlled substances for medical purposes, non-discrimination and gender equality, the rights of children, indigenous peoples, the prohibition of arbitrary detention, torture and other forms of inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment and extrajudicial killings. The rights of families were also mentioned.

Some speakers underscored the need to consider the specific needs of women and vulnerable groups for reasons of age, ethnicity, racial or socioeconomic conditions. Many speakers highlighted the importance of a public health-centred approach, as part of comprehensive and balanced drug-control policies that place human beings at their centre and are grounded on the principle of common and shared responsibility. The importance of effective law enforcement as part of such policies was also mentioned.

Many speakers noted the need to ensure access to effective and evidence-based prevention, treatment, care, recovery and social-reintegration services. In that regard, the supporting role of families was highlighted. The importance of informed consent to drug-dependence treatment was also noted. Reference was further made to the stigmatization and criminalization of drug use as constituting barriers to full access to such services.

Several speakers referred to the benefits of risk- and harm-reduction measures, including opioid-substitution treatment and needle- and syringe-exchange programmes in the context of the prevention and treatment of HIV and other blood-borne diseases.It was also mentioned that the international drug-control conventions allow States the flexibility to adapt their policies to national circumstances. In the context of criminal-justice measures, many speakers highlighted the importance of proportionality in sentencing and of alternatives to conviction or punishment for non-violent and minor drug-related offences. It was also mentioned that both aggravating and mitigating circumstances should be taken into account.

Many speakers stated their opposition to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, and in particular for drug-related offences. Other speakers noted that national sovereignty with respect to drug-policy decisions and national policies aiming at a drug-free environment should be respected.

Many speakers referred to the necessity to implement gender-sensitive and gender-responsive policies tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of female drug users and drug offenders, and to mitigate

the negative impact on their families. Reference was made to stigmatization, violence, disproportionate sentencing, prior victimization, poverty, the specific needs of pregnant women and women with caretaking responsibilities. The United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) were mentioned in that regard.

Speakers also pointed to the need to focus on the promotion and protection of children's rights, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which requires measures to protect children from the illicit use of drugs and to prevent their exploitation in illicit drug production and trafficking. The need to invest in the proper development of children and young people through prevention and education was stressed. To that end, it was necessary to foster cooperation among the health, child-protection and justice systems.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Khaled Shamaa, Chair of the Board for the General Assembly special session on the world drug problem and co-Chair of round table IV, held on Thursday morning, 21 April.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt), co-Chair, round table IV: It is my great pleasure to present the co-Chairs' summary of the salient points of round table IV, entitled "Cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug-control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation", which was held on 20 April. Round table IV was co-chaired by Mr. Urmas Reinsalu, the Minister of Justice of Estonia, and myself. The salient points summarized by the co-Chairs are as follows.

Many speakers reaffirmed their strong commitment to the three international drug-control conventions emphasizing the flexibility they offer in addressing evolving challenges of the world drug problem, in accordance with their national needs and circumstances. Many speakers welcomed the section dedicated to new psychoactive substances and amphetamine-type stimulants in the outcome document of this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). There was broad consensus that new psychoactive substances were a collective challenge that required an immediate and effective response. In particular, the fast-evolving nature of the market in such substances and the high number of substances entering the market were highlighted as a threat to public health and the capacity of law-enforcement responses.

Some speakers referred to the fact that the packaging and continued chemical evolution of the compounds allowed drug traffickers to circumvent legislation. The challenges posed by the trafficking in chemical precursors were also highlighted. Many speakers reported on their national legislative responses as they addressed the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances, and in that regard it was emphasized that legislation alone would not solve the problem.

It was mentioned that investments in developing public-health policies were needed and that policies should target those new substances with prevention strategies based on scientific evidence and effective treatment responses. Many speakers offered to share their expertise and experience with the international community. The need to strengthen the capacity of Member States in forensic and toxicological analysis and in reporting was also mentioned. In that regard, several speakers referred to the need for cooperation among health authorities, laboratories and law enforcement agencies in order to identify the new psychoactive substances and develop technical and forensic information for prevention, treatment and enforcement purposes.

Many speakers recognized the need for establishing national early-warning systems for new psychoactive substances and called upon all countries to share information on public-health forensic data through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Early Warning Advisory on New Psychoactive Substances. Several speakers recognized the important role of international organizations, such as UNODC, the World Health Organization and the International Narcotics Control Board, in supporting Member States in addressing the threat posed by those new substances and in alerting the international community in a timely fashion of harmful single or groups of substances entering the market.

Many speakers highlighted the importance of a balanced, integrated and comprehensive approach in responding to the evolving threats and challenges, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. There was a broad consensus on the need

to enhance international and cross-border cooperation in addressing and countering the world drug problem. In that regard, the importance of capacity-building, technical assistance, intelligence-sharing, as well as law-enforcement cooperation and judicial cooperation, was highlighted.

A few speakers pointed out that, with the globalization of synthetic-drug markets, the traditional distinction between producing, transit and destination countries within the developed and the developing countries has become less valid. The importance of enhancing cooperation to address drug-related issues at the regional and international levels was stressed, as was the importance of partnerships with civil society.

Many speakers referred to the transnational challenge posed by the increased use of the Internet and social media for the purposes of drug trafficking, selling and advertising and the recruitment of drug couriers. The difficulties faced in implementing drug-control policies with regard to shipments via the postal services was also mentioned. At the same time, the Internet was recognized as an opportunity to reach out to a wider audience for drug-prevention purposes.

It was also emphasized that drug policies should be people-centred and public health-centred, respecting human rights and human dignity, with due consideration given to proportionate sentencing. Some speakers underlined the need to further discuss whether the existing international drug-control system could adequately address the current challenges and threats posed by the world drug problem and referred, in that regard, to new approaches, including the decriminalization of possession for personal use. Many speakers recognized the need to increase investments in data collection and analysis with a view to better informing the policy responses to the current challenges.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Reza Najafi, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations in Vienna and co-Chair of round table V, which was held on Thursday afternoon, 21 April.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran), co-Chair, round table V: It is my pleasure to present the co-Chairs' summary of the salient points of round table V, on alternative development, regional, interregional and international cooperation on a development-oriented, balanced drug-control policy and efforts to address socioeconomic issues, which was held on 21 April from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The round table was co-chaired by His Excellency Mr. Ollanta Humala Tasso, the President of Peru; His Excellency Mr. Bernard Nottage, the Minister of National Security of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas; and myself. The salient points summarized by the co-Chairs are as follows.

A number of speakers stressed that poverty, food insecurity, marginalization, vulnerability, insecurity and the lack of access to land and markets were some of the key factors that fostered illicit crop cultivation. The speakers noted that alternative-development programmes are geared towards not only reducing the illicit cultivation of coca, opium poppy and cannabis, but also improving the socioeconomic conditions of marginalized farming communities, which, in many cases, have no other means to earn a livelihood than to engage in illicit crop cultivation.

The speakers recognized that there can be no sustainable development without peace, and a holistic response is needed to the world drug problem, including by addressing the broader socioeconomic issues and by ensuring a development-oriented approach to the world drug problem. The speakers highlighted that alternative development should be included in broader national development strategies. The speakers also stressed the importance and added value of this special session in further advancing alternative development as an important development-oriented drug-control approach that addresses the root causes of illicit drug crop cultivation. The speakers reiterated the importance of incorporating alternative development into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and recognized that it directly contributes to the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Several speakers stressed that alternative development required a long-term, sustainable, integrated comprehensive approach, including the provision and improvement of access to infrastructure, health, education and markets, among others. The importance of addressing the needs of women and the issues of environmental sustainability in the implementation of alternative development were highlighted.

The speakers noted that, in order for alternative development to unlock its full potential, it is important to address the discrepancy between the political endorsement of alternative development and the limited funding that alternative development has received,

which has often been provided on a short-term basis. Alternative-development funding must be stepped up so as to meet the actual needs of the vulnerable farming communities.

Speakers also noted the need to strengthen the impact of research and to broaden the evidence base in order to measure the outcomes of alternative development. A number of speakers highlighted that alternative development must be designed with a human-centred approach on human rights. The speakers pointed to the critical importance of involving all relevant stakeholders, particularly farming communities, in all phases of alternative-development implementation to ensure their full participation in the implementation and ownership of the alternative-development programmes. Some speakers stressed the importance of implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development when designing relevant policies and implementing alternative development on the ground. International and regional cooperation, including South-South cooperation, were mentioned as critical for ensuring successful alternative development. Several speakers highlighted the importance of market access and of establishing market links for alternative-development products.

Several speakers noted the balloon effect that often took place in illicit crop cultivation areas and stressed that addressing the world drug problem must continue to be a common and shared responsibility through a comprehensive and balanced approach, where both supply and demand must be addressed and the farming community recognized. The importance of preventive alternative development, both in rural and urban settings, and the need to share best practices and lessons learned on alternative development were highlighted. Some speakers highlighted the need to consider implementing alternative development in urban settings so as to encourage the development of viable economic alternatives, particularly for communities affected by poverty and drug-related activities in urban areas, in particular, for women and youth.

Finally, UNODC was encouraged to play a facilitating role with donors, United Nations agencies and other actors in the implementation of the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly (resolution S-30/1, annex) and its recommendations, and the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, noting that adequate resources would be required.

The Acting President: I shall now deliver the closing remarks of the President of the General Assembly on his behalf.

"In a few minutes, I will have the honour to close the thirtieth special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the world drug problem.

"Over the past three days, and indeed in the months and years leading up to this session, I believe we have witnessed a truly historic process — a process of reflection culminating in a moment of genuine realization.

"Those assembled here, the Member States, have worked hard to adopt an outcome document on the world drug problem (resolution S-30/1, annex) that reflects where the world, as a whole, stands today. At the same time, we have identified important issues and set our sights on even greater heights on our way to 2019 and beyond. The stakeholders — members of civil society, academia, the scientific community, parliamentarians, women, youth and children — have also contributed greatly to our debate. With our experience and expertise, we have drawn attention to the immense human cost of this problem and indeed, at times, the cost of the approaches we have taken to address it. As we move forward, I hope that efforts will be made, administrative and otherwise, to strengthen engagement in this process.

"Over the past three days, together, Member States and civil society alike have delivered a clear message, namely, that we care about the world drug problem. Or more precisely, that we care about the people most affected by this problem. More than ever before, the global consensus recognizes that the solution to the problem lies in a more humane, public health-oriented, human rights-compliant, evidence-based approach that addresses this issue in all its complexity.

"In addition, Member States have shown that they are willing to debate how best to address the problem and that they are willing to listen to different views, to different experiences. It is my firm wish and my steadfast hope that this feeling of common and shared responsibility, this pledge to flexibility and openness, to consensus and commitment, will permeate future discussions of the world drug problem.

"As valuable as these discussions have been, however, right now, we need to do more. People suffering from addiction, communities torn apart by drug-related crime, people who need controlled substances for medical purposes and others need more from us. They need a renewed commitment to action at the local, national and global levels. They need a more comprehensive and humane approach to the world drug problem now and in preparation for 2019. They need action for the health and well-being of humanity, as mentioned in our international drug-control conventions. They need interventions that have been proven to work and, perhaps as importantly, they need honesty about those interventions that have failed.

"Over the past few days, I have heard many stress that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) cannot be achieved unless we address the world drug problem, and I could not agree more. As we leave here, therefore, as we gear up to address this problem in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, I encourage Member States to be mindful of the key principles behind the 2030 Agenda — the commitment to leave no one behind, to advance a more people-centred approach and to achieve a sustainable and just world.

"In conclusion, I wish to thank, once again, the co-Chairs of the Round Tables for their work and for the presentation of the salient points of the discussions. I also wish to thank the United Nations agencies and the United Nations Secretariat, both in Vienna and here in New York, for their constant support and assistance in preparing this special session.

"And, finally, I thank everyone — Member States, civil society and other stakeholders — for their contributions to the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly and for their continued commitment to address more effectively, more humanely, this complex world drug problem."

We have now come to the end of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The Acting President: I declare closed the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.